



www.rivervalleyrc.org

Columbus Office

710 Front Avenue, Suite A
P. O. Box 1908
Columbus, GA 31902
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (706) 256-2908
TDY (706)256-2944

Americus Office

228 West Lamar Street
Americus, GA 31709
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (229) 931-2745
Fax (229) 931-2917

Toll Free (877) 819-6348

RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

**Marion County Commission Office
100 East Burkhalter Avenue
Buena Vista, Georgia
January 23, 2019**

MINUTES

Members Attending/Representing

(Representing 15 Counties)
Barry Waters, City of Ft. Gaines
Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe
Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville
Chip Jones, Stewart County
Clay Jones, Sumter County
Damon Hoyte, Cusseta-Chattahoochee Co.
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Dr. Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County
Harry Lange, Harris County
Hobby Stripling, City of Vienna
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion Co.
James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee Co.
Jennie Bartee, City of Cordele
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee County,
RVRC Secretary
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Mickey George, Macon County
Patricia Goodman, Randolph County
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista
Randy Howard, Sumter County,
RVRC Vice Chair

Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Tony Kennedy, Webster County
Wally Summers, Sumter County

Members Not Present

A.J. Rivers, Crisp County
Barry Whitley, City of Butler
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman
Clinton Perry, Jr. Taylor County, RVRC Chair
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County
Evelyn Turner Pugh, Muscogee County
Ernest Jenkins, Clay County
Fred Gordon, Muscogee County
Greg Barineau, Schley County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Jimmy Babb, City of Lumpkin
Matt Gunnels, Marion County
Nelson Brown, City of Americus
Pam Jordan, Talbot County
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton
Sam Farrow, Jr., Crisp County
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert
Tameka Harris, Taylor County
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County

Others Present

Amy Varnum, Georgia Dept. of Labor
Sarah Lee Crumbs, Georgetown-Quitman Co.
Family Connections
Rebecca White, Randolph County Chamber
Debbie Stone, Stewart County
Janet Joiner, City of Vienna
Kathy Burns, Senator David Perdue Representative
Laura Gower, Senator Isakson Representative
Elaine Gillispie, Cong. Bishop's Representative
Tammye Jones, Cong Bishop's Representative
William Easton, GDOT TIA Program Manager
Kenneth Franks, State TIA Administrator
Ronnie Crozier, Clay Co. Manager
Ben Cowart, GEFA External Affairs Manager
Terry Smith, Geotechnical & Environmental
Consultants, Inc.

Staff Present

Patti Cullen, Executive Director
Sarah Walls, Asst. Executive Director
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director
Jim Livingston, Comm. & Eco. Dev. Dir.
Janice West, WIOA Director
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

Welcome and Recognition of Visitors

Randy Howard, Vice Chair, brought the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked new council members to introduce themselves.

Chair Howard asked Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Secretary, to lead the council in prayer and Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, to lead the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review and Approval of Minutes*

Council reviewed the minutes of the November 28, 2018 council meeting that was either mailed or emailed to council members the previous week for their review.

There being no additions or changes, Vice Chair Howard requested a motion to approve the November 28, 2018 council minutes. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan Program and Funding

Ben Cowart, External Affairs Manager for GEFA, gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority’s Loan Program. He explained the Federal Loan Program is for projects to solve water supply problems for drinking water, wastewater and stormwater projects. These loan programs have a maximum loan amount of \$25,000,000 per year.

Mr. Cowart said the state also has loan funding programs to finance drinking water/wastewater projects and water supply projects. The state programs have a maximum loan amount of \$3,000,000 per year. He explained that both the Federal and State loan programs are all low interest loans with free underwriting, one percent closing cost, and that a local match is not required.

Transportation Improvement Act (TIA) Update

Kenneth Franks, State TIA Administrator, and William Eastin, TIA Program Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting some of the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) projects that have been completed, or are in progress in the region. Mr. Franks stated the Southern Georgia region had passed TIA and had begun collecting money in October, 2018. This brought 4 regions into TIA. He said River Valley has collected approximately \$275,000,000 thru December, 2018, with \$206,000,000 going toward approved TIA projects and \$69,000,000 going directly to local governments for transportation related needs. He then turned the program over to William Eastin, Program Manager. Mr. Eastin said the River Valley region has a total of 23 projects on the investment list with 7 under construction and 7 completed totaling almost \$122 million dollars spent as of the end of 2018. Projects under construction are Lake Black Sheer, SR 103 Passing Lanes in Harris County, SR 224 passing lanes in Macon County, SR 128 Bridge in Macon County, SR 219 passing lanes and the City of Columbus Riverwalk. The 7 projects that have been completed were all completed under budget. Mr. Franks said that the lists of projects, annual reports for previous years, and amount spent on each project are listed on the TIA website.

Patti Cullen, Executive Director, stated that the current TIA would expire in 2022. She explained each county government will have to pass a resolution supporting the Transportation Investment Act if we are to move forward with another 10-year cycle. If not all of the RV region counties pass a resolution it could still be placed on the ballot if a majority of the counties requested it. The same rules for the Roundtable will

[Chattahoochee](#) | [Clay](#) | [Crisp](#) | [Dooly](#) | [Harris](#) | [Macon](#) | [Marion](#) | [Muscogee](#)
[Quitman](#) | [Randolph](#) | [Schley](#) | [Stewart](#) | [Sumter](#) | [Talbot](#) | [Taylor](#) | [Webster](#)

apply as the current TIA. Patti said everyone needs to be thinking of projects for their county/city. It was requested that a sample resolution be emailed to council members.

Disclosure of Employee's Business Transactions with Local Governments for Calendar Year 2018 (per O.C.G.A. 50-8-63) *

Patti Cullen, Executive Director, explained that each year the RVRC is required, by Law, to disclose if any employee has had any business transactions with local governments within the region. Patti stated that employees were given information on the law and requested to notify complete a form concerning any transactions.

Patti requested permission to notify DCA that there were no business transactions between RVRC employees and local governments. Barry Waters, City of Fort Gaines, made a motion to approve the request and Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Budget Amendment*

Emily Chambers, Finance Director, explained that the Executive Committee had met prior to the Council meeting and had discussed Budget Amendment 1 for Fiscal Year 2019 at length. A projected fund balance of approximately \$72,500 has been added to the budget since the initial budget in July. This was primarily due to an increase in the Community Development Block Grant funds received in October. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 1; Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Staff Reports

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, said the November 2018 Financial Report was included in the council package and then asked members to refer to it. Ms. Chambers said through November 30, 2018 we had an overall increase in fund balance of \$5,000 giving us a general fund fund balance of \$685,000.

Janice West, WIOA Director, reported WIOA staff, along with Eckerd Connects staff, gave a presentation at the Business Services Forum that was held on December 5th. She said it focused on WIOA services that are available to local employers. There are 184 people enrolled in WIOA training activities and staff expects that number to continue to increase when the spring semester begins. Janice reported that the WIOA program was monitored in January and found to have 3 minor problems that staff corrected and submitted to the State for approval.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, shared with the council that 190 people were on the waiting list for services. All counties have seniors waiting for services except Clay County. She urged if anyone knew of someone needing services to have them contact the AAA department for screening. She explained that one of the changes to the Medicare program is there is now a Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment period from January 1st thru March 31st. She said staff will give a presentation for any group that would like to know more about the program. She said staff began teaching a Diabetes Self-Management Class at the Vienna Senior Center. The class is at capacity and people who would like to participate in a second class are being placed on a waiting list.

Katie also announced that the Wellness Walk will be held the 1st Friday in May and encouraged everyone to make plans to attend.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, mentioned thirteen comprehensive plans are in various stages of being updated or in the adoption process. He said the annual Prison to Peanuts event is in the planning stage and would be taking place May 4th. Gerald reminded everyone that the Scrap Tire Program is still available and that staff will help with the application process, if needed.

Jim Livingston, Community and Economic Development Director, reported the CEDS committee had met and said broadband is a priority of the committee in FY19. He said that emails have gone out to the counties and cities requesting a survey be completed concerning broadband services in the region. There has been a good response with 250 people having taken the survey so far. Jim said that staff continues to work on the Community Development Block Grant applications. The Department of Community Affairs has changed (increased) some of the requirements for the applications, one of which is the Service Delivery Strategy which must be updated for housing revitalization projects. Staff is administering twenty-two Community Development Block Grants, OneGA, and Immediate Threat and Danger projects – several of these will be closing out during the first couple of months of 2019.

Jim said the loan fund program has money to loan for business expansions or start-ups that will have job retention or be creating jobs. If you or someone you know would like more information please contact Jim Livingston or Sarah Walls.

ADJOURN

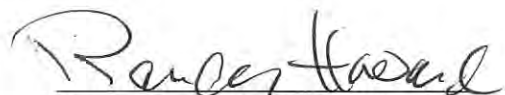
Randy Howard asked Representatives from Senator Isakson, Senator Perdue and Congressman Bishop's office to give updates on the federal shutdown. Wally Summers announced a new program at SGTC to train log truck drivers focusing on safety issues.

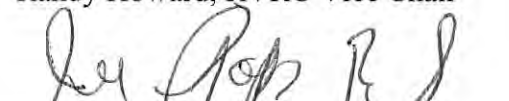
Patti Cullen, Executive Director, announced her retirement on April 30, 2019. She stated she had been with the organization for 37 ½ years and that she enjoyed working with all the cities and counties over the years.

Randy Howard adjourned the meeting.

February 27, 2019

Date


Randy Howard, RVRC Vice Chair


Jerry "Pops" Barnes, RVRC Secretary